

### **Abstract of the Invention**

A system and method for enabling real-time off-site video image storage is disclosed. An off-site storage site is coupled to camera servers at client sites via a private network. Each camera server is further coupled to one or more surveillance cameras. Video images captured by cameras located at the client sites are forwarded to an off-site server via a camera server. Video images received by the off-site server are produced for live viewing and/or archived in an image database. Users can retrieve live or archived video images through a client workstation that communicates with the off-site server over the public Internet. Retrieval of video images is based on a web-browser interface. Live viewing of video images is supplemented by real-time camera control functions that alter the pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) position of the camera producing the live images. Commands for controlling the PTZ camera are encoded by the client workstation and transmitted to the off-site server. The off-site server converts the camera control codes into control strings that are recognizable by the particular camera.